

Death abolished by our SAVIOUR: Who bath
brought Life and Immortality to Light
through the GOSPEL.

A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the
D E A T H

Of the Reverend
Mr. *John Munckley*;

Preached AUG. 20, 1738.

In *Bartholomew-Close*.

By SAMUEL WRIGHT, D.D.

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THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
FROM THE FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT TIME

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*A SERMON preached to the
Congregation that attended
the MINISTRY of the Rev.
Mr. JOHN MUNCKLEY ; on
CHRIST's abolishing DEATH.*

2 Tim. I. 10. latter part.

—“ Who hath abolished death ;
“ and hath brought life and im-
“ mortality to light, thro’ the
“ GOSPEL.”

AT your request I am now to assist you in improving the unexpected death of your late justly esteemed and beloved PASTOR. As he was a preacher of that Gospel which hath brought life and immortality to light ; and his constant study and endeavours were to prepare himself, and you, for an happy immortality ; so we may with special propriety fix our thoughts upon this subject on the present occasion. Moreover, Since death is now become the gate of life thro’ our Lord Jesus

A 2

Christ,

Christ, this should lead us to think of *Him* who hath abolished death, whilst we are mourning the loss of a Good Man who hath fallen by the awful stroke of it. In the midst of life we are in death, and therefore every one of us should make it our concern to be *ready*, and to get above the slavish fear of a dissolution. An unfeigned faith in the Gospel, accompanied with an humble sincere obedience to the precepts of it, will make death our *desire*, rather than our *terroure*. But as our Saviour said to the *Jews*, so it may be said to others who have the Gospel, that if they believe not in him whom God hath sent, they shall die in their sins.

THE context tells us, that “ God hath
 “ saved us, and called us with an holy call-
 “ ing; not according to our works, but ac-
 “ cording to his own purpose and grace,
 “ which was given us in Christ Jesus before
 “ the world began; but is now made mani-
 “ fest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus
 “ Christ.” The sense of which you may
 take in other words thus:

God hath saved us from the legal spirit of fear and bondage*, from the servitude and condemnation of sin, and from the powers of darkness; and hath called both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to be a church and people, separated from the kingdoms of this world, and to be holy as “ He who hath called them out of
 “ this world is holy.” Not that our being

• Ver. 7.

brought

brought into this privileged, consecrated state, is owing to our works, or to be any way ascribed to our merit, but “ according to his “ own purpose and grace,” (or his gracious purpose, and purely from his own infinite goodness) we obtain this favour of being under a dispensation of religion the most merciful of all others, and which may emphatically be stiled an *holy calling*.

“ THIS grace was given us in Christ ;” *i. e.* it was appointed before the other ages and dispensations of religion began, and determined to extend to us in the Gospel age. It was given us in God’s decree, and in the provision made for it from the beginning of the world ; tho’ not clearly and fully understood, till it is now “ made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

If you here ask, how this purpose of grace is accomplished, and our salvation effected by Christ ? the answer is in the words of the text, “ He hath abolished death, and hath “ brought life and immortality to light, “ through the Gospel.” He hath taken away the dominion, the sting, and the dread of death ; and he hath brought the future resurrection of the body, and the immortality both of soul and body, to our certain notice, or to a most clear and satisfying light. By these discoveries, and blessed effects of Christ’s appearing, “ we are saved—we are called “ to be holy.”—and are made partakers of the grace purposed and designed, (before the

entrance of sin and death) when the world began.

JESUS CHRIST, the great father and author of the Gospel age, delivereth from death so, as to deliver both from the evils that lead to it, and those that follow upon it. And he hath revealed a future *life* and *immortality*, so as to include every thing that is necessary to our obtaining it, thro' the Gospel; for "He hath the words of eternal life *."

WHERE then should dying creatures take refuge, when we look to our own death approaching?—or where should we go for consolation upon the death of useful desirable friends and relatives, but to Jesus Christ, "who hath abolished death, and clearly revealed life and immortality?" This is a most important subject, and worthy our serious thoughts at all times; but I apprehend, we are now come disposed to give a special and more than ordinary attention to a Discourse on death and it's consequences, in these most useful and instructive views of them. I therefore propose to consider the two propositions in the text distinctly, as well as in their reference to each other.

I. JESUS CHRIST appearing as our Saviour, hath abolished death.

II. HE hath most clearly and satisfactorily revealed a future life and immortality.

* John vi. 68.

THE practical improvement of each of these heads will be directed to as we go along: And some things particularly suited to the *present occasion*, will be added in the close of this discourse.

I. "JESUS CHRIST appearing as our Saviour, hath abolished death."

He hath not so abolished it, as that those who believe in him should be exempted from the common law of mortality: For all the disciples of Jesus must be conformed to him in dying *naturally*, as well as in dying *figuratively* to sin and this world. As the body of Christ was laid in the grave, so our bodies must go thither; but they shall not always continue there, they shall as certainly rise again as the body of Christ did. Of this hereafter.

LET us now consider what account the Scriptures give us of Christ's *abolishing death* in his appearing as a Saviour to us. Dr. Hammond expresseth it thus, "that Christ by his coming and preaching the Gospel hath voided the *power* of death." Others add, "the *malice* and *enmity* of death is made void," expressly ascribing this to the obedience and death of Christ. By his righteousness and sufferings he hath conquered death, and made void its claims, in the penal fruits and consequences of it to his faithful followers. According to these constructions and explications, the abolishing of death

§ *Death abolished by*

by our Lord Jesus Christ may be considered in the respects following.

1. HE hath abolished the *dominion* of death, and taken away its *right* to destroy. Death obtained a reigning power, upon the human race being at first consigned or delivered over to it *. “ In the day thou eatest “ thereof, thou shalt surely die †.” This, in other words, is to say, that in the day thou rebellest against the Author and Maintainer of thy being, thou forfeitest that being he hath given thee, and “ thy soul shall “ be required of thee.” This declaration and threatening, so just in itself, shall take place by an actual delivering thee over to *the power* of death. From thence it follows, that as the Executioner reigneth when the Judge hath passed the sentence, and given orders for execution, such we may conceive the reign of death to be. It hath full power to detain, to load with chains and miseries, and to fulfil all the demands of *vindictive justice*. The consequence of death’s having this absolute rule and power, cannot be less than “ everlasting destruction from the presence “ of the Lord.” For the reign of death once begun, will last to the utter destruction of them who are given up to it, unless some Deliverer interpose, some redemption be made. This is the substance of what the scripture

* Rom. v. 14.

† Gen. ii. 17.

our Saviour Jesus Christ. 9

hath declared concerning "death's passing
" upon all men, for that all have sinned *."

THERE is a *jus* or law of death, given by the great Creator and Disposer of all things; according to which, death makes a seizure, and keeps those under it's power, who have rebelliously refused subjection to him that made them. Upon this is founded the *dominium* or empire and reign of death, in the whole extent and continuance of it. Upon this law or maxim, the dominion I am speaking of is wholly founded, *viz.* "the wages of sin is death." Now as this law of mortality extends to the whole race of transgressors; so he that abolisheth death, or maketh void the power of it, must be able to rescue from that sentence, and law, which consigns the sinner over to it's empire and dominion. And then, also, upon the repeal or limitations of that law, he must actually deliver the dead from the territories and bounds appointed for them. Both these the scriptures expressly declare concerning our salvation by Jesus Christ. He delivereth from the *condemning sentence*, by offering himself for us; and he rescueth from the power of the grave, by entring in his own person into the regions of the dead, and bringing forth his ransomed from thence. "Christ
" being raised from the dead, dieth no more;
" death hath no more dominion over him †."

* Rom. v. 12.

† Rom. vi. 9.

Nor shall it prevail over his faithful followers; for “by his own blood he entered in
“once into the holy place, having obtained
“eternal redemption for us *.”

THE account of our Saviour’s abolishing death in this manner,—that “as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign unto eternal life by Jesus Christ,”—the apostle speaks of very fully in the fifth to the *Romans*; and that chapter can hardly be understood without a careful attention to these things.

As the Jewish law, when it lost it’s reigning force and power, is said to be abolished, (“† having abolished the law of commandments;”) so death losing it’s dominion, and all right to it, is said to be abolished by Jesus Christ. Thus the scripture being it’s own interpreter, we see what is the sense in which it useth the word *abolish*. And in this view of things there can be deliverance from death no other way but by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by faith in him: He only can satisfy the demands of that law, which consigns us over unto death; and he only can rescue souls from hell, and break up the boundaries of the grave, and take those from under it’s dominion who are carried captives thither.

* Heb. ix. 12.

† Eph. ii. 15.

2. BY Jesus Christ the *enmity* of death is abolished, and we are delivered from the *sting* of it.

As it is said of the Son of God, that "he" "was manifested to take away sin;" so by his appearing for this end, he hath taken out the *sting* of death: "for the *sting* of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ*." Every man, who thro' faith in Christ, according to the Gospel, is brought into a pardoned justified faith, doth hereby obtain a deliverance from death, consider'd in its *enmity*; and is only called to submit to it, as it is in the hand of Christ, who hath made it *friendly* to us. It is commission'd to take the ministers and subjects of Christ's kingdom, only as a messenger from their Lord, to remove them from a world of sin and pain; from toils, and labours, and disappointments; to a world and state of holiness, and rest, and joyful recompence.

DEATH so reigns over them that are cut off in their sins, and in the contempt of the Gospel, that it hath power to execute an *irreversible* sentence. For death, in such cases, is an executioner sent by the *condemning justice* of God. It comes therefore

* 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

with full enmity, and none shall be able to deliver the *condemned prisoner*, or to find a ransom for him. The ransom of a soul, in such circumstances of unbelief and disobedience, is beyond all price, and it ceaseth for ever. But when death cometh under the commission of Christ, and according to the Gospel limitations of its power, it only translates the soul to be with him that hath created and redeemed it, and layeth the body to sleep in the dust; committing it to the grave, to be kept there till it shall be called for at the day of Christ's future appearance. Thus the enmity is slain.

BUT may it not here further be added, that the *manner* and *time* of a good man's death are generally so order'd, as to take off the apprehensions of enmity in the *very stroke* of it? Death is so commissioned by Christ, as to come at the fittest season (all things considered) and under the least appearance of enmity to a faithful Christian. However the arrests of death may seem to be alike, in the case of them that believe and obey the Gospel, and of them that believe and obey it not; yet in the disposition and frame of their souls, if we could look so far, we should see as much difference, as there is—between falling a prey into the hand of an enemy,—and falling asleep in the bosom, or under the care and protection of a friend. Though death may seem to ravage in the church of Christ, and even
among

among good men, as well as among the rest of the world, and by the generality is therefore thought to be under no order or government at all; yet it is certainly quite otherwise.

It is said of Christ, that "he hath the keys of the invisible world, and of death*." As he hath purchased for men the grace of being put into a new state of trial; so he is fitly constituted judge, when that time of trial shall be finished with every one. And no doubt but the laws of the invisible world, and of God's moral government, are exactly observed in transmitting of spirits from this earth, both to the upper and lower regions. Over both these our once dead, but now glorified LORD, hath obtained the dominion. So that as to the time, circumstances and manner, in which the members of Christ's kingdom are removed from one world to another, no doubt but our blessed Lord takes the most favourable and proper measures to render death *safe* and *friendly* to every one of them. In his wisdom and goodness let us then learn to acquiesce, whether any one's death be sudden or lingering, at home or abroad, in the vigorous, or in the wearisome stages of life. No words can better represent Christ's taking away the enmity and sting of death, than those of the apostle, when he says, "them

* Rev. i. 10.

" that

“that *sleep in Jesus* God will bring with him.” From hence we are encouraged to look upon death as no more an *enemy* to a true Christian, than *sleep* is: and by thus considering it, we may familiarize the thought of dying, when we go to sleep at night, in hope of rising with new life and vigour in the morning. This leads to another thing mentioned in Scripture concerning Christ’s delivering us from death,

3. HE hath abolished its power of *enslaving* us by previous *frightful* apprehensions, and *continual terror* of it.

NOT that all Christians are free from a *slavish fear* of death; but Christ hath so abolished it, that all might be free, at least from that *degree of terror* which hath bondage in it. It might be thus if it were not our own *fault*, or our own *weakness*. For as the children of the kingdom which God hath given his Son, are “partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil:” and then it followeth immediately, that the design and plain tendency of this was “to deliver them, who thro’ fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*.”

THE instances of those who thro’ faith,

* Heb. ii. 14, 15.

prayer, patience, and self-denial have overcome the *dread* of death, are sufficient to prove, that its power of enslaving thro' fear is abolished thro' the Gospel.

4. DEATH is abolished by our Lord Jesus Christ so intirely, that it shall not be *able to detain* the body when called for; but at the great rising day shall be *compleatly conquered*, and triumphed over *for ever*.

THE assurances that we have, of the body's being raised to life again so as never to die more, and of its being reunited to the immortal Spirit from which it was for a time separated, and of both entring into eternal life and glory, are so very express, as to declare the entire and *absolute abolishing* of death at the consummation of the Gospel kingdom. And thus the second proposition in the text stands connected with, and fully confirms the first. There is such a clear and perfect revelation of life and immortality thro' the Gospel, that in the final issue of things death shall be taken away, and conquered, so as to be known no more in the kingdom of Christ for ever. Of this *distinctly*.

II. "Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to the *clearest light*, thro' the *Gospel*."

By tradition and the use of natural reason, the Gentiles which had not immediate revelation,

revelation, yet had some apprehensions and expectations of immortality; and in some of the writings of the heathen philosophers there are very strong presumptions, and rational proofs and confirmations of those presumptions, that the soul doth exist after the death of the body. But their opinions are so various, and their reasonings so dubious and uncertain, that there is much more *darkness* than *light* in them, and therefore it is properly said, with reference to these, that "Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel."

DR. *Whitby*, in his Annotations on this text, hath drawn up a large and particular account of the *very uncertain* reasonings of the wisest and best philosophers upon the future existence of the soul. And he hath justly observed, that as to the life and resurrection of the body, they had no thoughts about it. They were so far from having any notion of this, that the *Athenians* mocked and derided St. *Paul's* account of it*.

THE *Jews* had better notions, both of immortality and the resurrection, from their scriptures, than the heathen had from any writings of their wisest men. "Enoch the seventh from *Adam* prophesied, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints†." From the time of God's being called "the God of *A-*

* Acts xvii. 32.

† Jude 14.

"braham,

brought to Light by the Gospel. 17

“*brabam*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*,” they were taught to argue that “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” The best expositors understand *Job* to speak of this, when he said, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And tho’ after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God*.” *David* had certainly a clear sense of this, when he said, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption†.” He had the clearest and fullest view of the resurrection of the *Messias*‡. The prophet *Daniel* expressly taught them, that “many who slept in the dust shou’d awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt§.”

THE common people in our Saviour’s days had such a belief of this, that *Martha*, the sister of *Lazarus*, when our Saviour spoke of her brother’s rising from the dead, made this reply, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day**.” But yet there was a learned and powerful sect in that nation, the sect of the *Sadducees*, who rejected the belief of this. It is therefore said with great propriety, that the full and clear discovery both of the body’s being raised to life again, and

* Job xix. 25, 26. † Psal. xvi. 10. ‡ Acts ii. 31.
§ Dan. xii. 2. ** John xi. 24.

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of the soul's immortality in and with the raised body, is only made to us by the Gospel.

By our Saviour we are expressly and most certainly assured, that "the hour is coming, " in which all that are in the graves shall " hear the voice of the Son of man, and " shall come forth. They that have done " good, unto the resurrection of life; and " they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*."

AGAIN, as it is said, that " God hath " appointed a day [a set time] in which " he will judge the world by that man " whom he hath ordained; so he hath assured the world of this, by raising him " from the dead †." And when that day cometh, in which Christ shall appear visibly in the heavens, then the bodies of them that sleep in him shall arise. They shall not be detained one moment longer. " I would not have you ignorant (says St. " Paul) concerning them that are asleep. " For if we believe that Jesus died and " rose again, even so them also that sleep " in Jesus God will bring with him. The " Lord himself shall descend from heaven, " [to bring them in a very pompous and " glorious manner] with a shout, with the " voice of the arch-angel, and with the " trump of God. And the dead in Christ

* John v. 28, 29.

† Acts xvii. 31.

brought to Light by the Gospel. 19

“ shall rise first. Then we, which are
“ alive and remain, shall be caught up to-
“ gether with them in the clouds, to meet
“ the Lord in the air: And so shall we be
“ ever with the Lord*.” In St. *John’s*
vision, he tells us, “ He saw the dead, small
“ and great, stand before God.” None so
small as to be overlook’d; none so great as
to resist the summons: Neither the deep-
est seas, nor the strongest monuments, nor
hell itself, being able to detain those that
were in them. “ The sea gave up the
“ dead which were in it: And the grave
“ delivered up the dead that lay there.
“ And they were judged. And death and
“ hell were cast into the lake of fire,
“ which is the second death †.” Then
they that shall be found among the people
of God, and are fitted to dwell with him,
shall be removed far from the regions of
death, and from all fears of it. For unto
them “ there shall be no more death, nei-
“ ther sorrow nor crying; neither shall there
“ be any more pain ‡.”

I HAVE quoted these scriptures at large,
to show, that the future life, and resurrec-
tion of the dead, with a consequent im-
mortality, are brought to light in the plain-
est, fullest manner, thro’ the Gospel. So
that none, who hear and read the Testa-
ment of our Lord and Saviour, can be ig-

* 1 Theff. iv. 14, &c.

† Rev. xx. 12, 13.

‡ Rev. xxi. 4.

norant of these things; and if they are soundly believed, the thoughts of death are in a manner lost and swallow'd up in the thoughts of that blessed life and immortality which lie beyond the grave. Therefore not only in what Christ hath done and suffer'd, to deliver us from the dominion, sting, and terror of death, but in what he hath taught with so much clearness and evidence concerning the future state of them that die in him, we learn to look upon death as an abolished thing: We have the other life so *nearly* and *strongly* in view, thro' the Gospel, that the passage-state, with all its *gloom*, is as nothing to the *joy* of our LORD, into which we shall be received.

Now according to this representation of the future eternal blessedness both of soul and body, a firm belief of it enableth us to triumph over death *two ways* more especially: That is, by carrying our hopes and desires above this present life, to that future life which is infinitely better; and at the same time giving us most comfortable and pleasing apprehensions of the difference between the body as it is *put off* at death, and as it shall be *renewed* at the resurrection.

I. THE clear discoveries of immortality enable us to triumph over death, by *carrying* our hopes and desires *above the present life*, to that *life* which is *future and everlasting*.

THE

brought to Light by the Gospel. 21

THE discoveries that are made of the perfection and felicity of them that inhabit the regions of eternity, transport the believing soul from the love of this life to the desire of a better. To read and think of the light and knowledge, the love and goodness, the life and active power of them that are made perfect with Christ, cannot but raise the longings of a sincere Christian, though he die for it, to be with Christ. This is *far better*, in his esteem, than the *best* life here upon earth. To be perfect, I say, in wisdom and love, and to be fixed in that happy society where there is none but what are so; and to have life in perfection too, without any thing to clog the motions, or to allay the enjoyments of it; may well raise our most ardent desires to an heavenly country. And where these desires are habitually fixed, and improved by frequent exercises of devotion, according to the instructions given us by the first publishers of Christianity, they will not only enable us to get above the *common fears* of death, but the more *shocking* apprehensions of it: Though it should appear in its *worst forms*, yet “all present sufferings will be accounted
“unworthy to be compared with the glory
“which shall be revealed in us.” By carrying our love and desire of *life*, as the Gospel doth, from the *present* to a future and *better* state of existence, we are prepared to go thro’ the change that is necessary to our

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passing from one world to another. And that which farther facilitates the passage, and enableth us to triumph over death, is,

2. THE comfortable and pleasing representation which we have of the *different state* of the body itself, at *death*, and at the *resurrection*.

IN this we are not left to entertain ourselves with mere conjectures; but we are assur'd by the express word of God, that "the body which is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory*." All resurrection-bodies will not be *equally* glorious; "for as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also shall be the resurrection of the dead:" But all shall be so *completely* glorious, as to be free from every *mark of dishonour*. It is also added by the Apostle, "that which is sown in weakness, shall be raised in power." What *degree* of power shall be granted to each, we are not told; but such as to take away, and stand directly opposed to its former weakness. "That which is sown a natural [or animal] body, shall be raised a spiritual, celestial body:" It shall then be suited to the capacities and desires of the soul, to be its everlasting companion; and suited to the celestial mansions, where it is to have its everlasting abode: "In my

* 1 Cor. xv. 41, &c.

brought to Light by the Gospel. 23

“ father’s house are many mansions; if it
“ were not so, I would have told you: I
“ go to prepare a place for you*.” In
short, whatever the difference be between
the body of Christ when it was crucified
and buried in the earth, and that body which
he now hath, in which he is preparing a
place for his faithful servants in the heavens,
that is the *pattern and model* of the difference
between our bodies, in their present
mortal, corruptible state, and that state when
they shall put on *incorruption*. “ The
“ Lord from heaven shall change our vile
“ body, that it may be fashioned like unto
“ his glorious body, according to his work-
“ ing whereby he is able to subdue all things
“ to himself†.” By our believing and close
meditation on this account of the happy
change that is made in the body itself, and
the glory and immortality to which it shall
be raised when called out of the grave, we
are enabled to conclude with St. *Paul*, that
“ when this mortal shall have put on im-
“ mortality, then shall be brought to pass
“ the saying that is written, Death is swal-
“ lowed up in victory‡.”

THIS subject may be applied to a variety
of things relating both to faith and practice;
but the time will not allow me to go into
particular inferences and deductions: I shall

* John xiv. 2. † Phil. iii. 21. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

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therefore improve what hath been said only by these two general conclusions.

I. CHRIST'S abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light thro' the Gospel, *should engage us firmly to adhere to the christian faith.*

“ WE should be ready always to give an account to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and reverence * :” And we should not be afraid of the pride or the scorn of those who set themselves against the common faith and hope of Christians. In opposition to them that thro' pride and vain conceit refuse to be subject to the Gospel-revelation, we should declare that we are not ashamed of it; since “ it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth † :” And in opposition to them that thro' the “ cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches,” depart from the word of Christ's kingdom, and become forgetful of *eternity*, we should resolve “ to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful who hath promised to be with us to the *end* of the *world*, and hereafter to receive us to glory.” The more we see men lose the apprehensions of a future state, by their neglecting or despising the scriptures, the more should this in-

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† Rom. i. 16.

crease our value and love of the word of God. Have we not known some who have become perfect brutes after they have learned to make a jest of their bibles? Are there not those who have broken through all the rules of *society*, and have reasoned themselves into the vilest actions, even such as *self-murder*, as soon as they have destroy'd the apprehensions of an awful future account, according to the description of it in the Gospel? Should not this make us resolve to abide by the *express assurances* of life, which we have in the christian revelation, so as not to be tossed to and fro by the uncertain, unsatisfying notions and ways of reasoning, which men that *have not faith* wander into? In this we should glory, as the peculiar honour of our religion, that it hath made the fullest and clearest discoveries of immortality and eternal bliss; and we should persevere in the believing expectation of it, to the end of our lives, "that we may then obtain the
" end of our faith and hope, even the sal-
" vation of soul and body." Which that we may do, we must attend to another general way of improving what hath been said.

2. UPON the consideration of a resurrection and eternal life, we should be diligent in *the practice of every christian duty*.

ALTHOUGH in the present life we have much to oppose and dishearten us in our observing the ordinances and institutions of the Gospel;

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Gospel ; though we meet with grievous flights and provocations to make us leave off works of piety and mercy ; yet the views of a future recompence, and of being blessed for ever with our Lord, should carry us above all discouragements. We should look to Jesus as our pattern and *chief leader*,
 “ who for the joy that was set before him,
 “ endured the cross; and endured all the
 “ contradictions of sinners against himself.”
 Without a due consideration of this, “ we
 “ shall be weary and faint in our minds*.”

In a word, the exhortation of *St. Paul*, at the conclusion of his discourse in proof of a resurrection, should never be forgotten by us: “ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be
 “ ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding
 “ in the work of the Lord;” [*i. e.* in every christian service and suffering] “ forasmuch
 “ as ye know that your labour is not in vain
 “ in the Lord†.”

To bring this to the present occasion. God hath now seen fit to take away from you a faithful and affectionate Monitor, who used to be statedly inculcating the great things both of christian *faith* and *practice* from this pulpit ; by whose awful unexpected *remove* out of our world, we are loudly call'd upon to prepare for *our own* removal, which we have reason to expect daily. The

* Heb. xii. 2, 3.

† 1 Cor. xv. 58.

natural strength and vigour with which your late pastor was bless'd, above most of us, should teach this lesson to the healthiest and strongest in this assembly, *viz.* to do whatever our hand finds to do for our own salvation, for the honour of God, and the good of others, with *all our might*, and without needless *delays*; since the most *likely prospects* of life do so sadly and frequently disappoint us.

THE preparations you have made for continuing the *worship* of God in this place, shews your expectation of the *continued* labours of him who is now taken from you. Could you have foreseen his death, perhaps you would not have taken this house for a *new term* of years; but since you have done so, you will, I doubt not, prudently exert yourselves to keep together as a *christian community*, till you see whether it be the will of God to give you another *Pastor*, or to direct your *settlement* with some other congregation. As to one or t'other, it is my hearty prayer for you, that all may be directed so as not to lose the things which have been wrought, but that you may receive a *full reward*.

WHAT remains to finish this discourse, is only to add some account of our dear *brother* and *friend*, the Rev. Mr. JOHN MUNCKLEY. Death has now sealed his

his character, and it should also seal his pious instructions upon your hearts. His ministerial warnings and teachings should be the more deeply impress'd, when you consider, that you shall see *his face* and hear *his voice no more*. [It is my secret hope, that some of our ministrations will be thought on with *greater kindness*, and to more advantage, after we are *dead*, than while we are living: I wish it might be so with you, in recollecting the things that you have heard from the *deceased*, and calling to mind the subjects and sermons that have proved upon any occasion of special service to you.] You know with what humility, and solicitous concern for your welfare, and sometimes with tears, he *spoke unto you the word of the Lord*. Remember him on this account, and *follow his faith*; considering also the *end of his conversation*. This is not my advice only, but an *apostolical rule and direction* *.

HIS sermons, you know, were prepared with diligence; and they were also carefully committed to memory. This was not from any affectation of singularity, or from a vanity of temper, but (as he himself once told me) that he might the better impress and fix things upon his own mind, in hope that he should be thereby enabled to convey them with greater clearness and advantage to the minds of others. You know his readi-

* Heb. xiii. 7.

ness, also, to assist you, by his counsels and prayers in private; and to discharge all parts of his ministerial office, as your occasions call'd for his help.

HE had a great deal of useful learning, and a good acquaintance with books; but his modesty and humility were such, as not to make the least ostentation*. His compositions were grave and solid, and mostly practical. His prayers were very serious, and earnest, in his desiring to save both *himself*, and them that heard him. Though your stated congregation was very small, yet he was not less careful to provide for you on that account, nor less affectionate in serving you. He had an uncommon fear, which he was never able to conquer, in his *publick work*: This was accompanied with a delivery that sometimes gave *uneasiness* to himself, (so I have heard him complain) as well as to others, especially such as were unacquainted with him. Upon this account, and this only as I apprehend, his labours were not accompanied with that acceptance and success which attend many others *less deserving*; and if any should reckon mine among that number, through their affection to him

* After some years study, and attending the lectures at a private academy near *London*, he went over to *Leyden*: His proficiency is well known to those that accompanied him there, and has been fully proved on several occasions; more especially, in the improvements of his son, whom he hath entirely educated himself, and instructed with so much reputation, both in human and religious knowledge.

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that is gone, I should not be displeased. In some places Mr. MUNCKLEY was well accepted; and I trust, his ministrations were so bless'd to you, that both he and you will have occasion for joy at the coming of our Lord.

I SHOULD not have taken notice of any seeming disadvantage in the character of our worthy friend, had not he himself often spoken of what I have mention'd, so as to shew the most pious *submissions* to God, and to manifest the most *shining benevolence* toward his brethren; so that this *shade* in the picture adds to the beauty and force of the brighter colours. This will appear by giving you a paragraph out of one of the last letters I received from him. The *letter* was written upon an affair of *charity*, in which he propos'd to assist me, both by writing into the country, and getting receipts sign'd, and other things that might save time and trouble to those that were entrusted with the distribution. He writes thus: " You cannot think, Sir, how much
 " you encouraged my spirits under the melancholy mortifications I meet with, by
 " the hopes you gave me, that though God
 " is not pleas'd to own me with any usefulness and acceptance in my own ministry,
 " I should, however, be some way instrumental in procuring something for the support of those whom God does own and
 " bless with a great deal of success." In-
 stead

stead of envy and *chagrin* under his own discouragements, to break forth in such joyful benevolence towards his brethren, hath something too great to be lost and buried in oblivion.

HE was indeed a most diligent solicitor to get supplies for his necessitous friends, and particularly for his poor brethren in the *West of England*. His applications for their support and encouragement, both in publick and private charities, had this recommendation, "that however any man's opinions differ'd from his own, he never desired one indigent person should be overlooked on that account: To be *poor* and to be *honest* were sufficient inducements with him to be their advocate." Both in his own private charities, and what he procured from others, he was careful to avoid every air of *vanity*, and to prevent the *smallest acknowledgments* in return. He had, it must be own'd, his peculiar attachments, that made him sometimes shew a great deal of eagerness and concern about a relation, or an intimate friend: His earnestness was to have them *as well* thought of by others, as by himself; but this did not lead him to any *evil* representations of those who were of different sentiments from him or his friends; nor did he quarrel with any man for not favouring their interests in any publick affair, where the opposers of them were guided by an *apprehension* of the *publick good*. He was
not,

not, by his special friendships, and strongest affections, (so far as I could ever observe) carried into any *party* views, to the lessening or despising of others.

HAPPY were it for us, if, instead of saying, "I am of *Paul*, and I of *Cephas*, and I " of *Apollos*," we could esteem each of them for their different gifts and talents; and look upon them all as the ministers of CHRIST for our salvation. But as the manner of some is to cry up the reasoning and learning of *Paul*, that they may run down the experience and boldness of *Cephas*; or to cry up the eloquence and scripture-knowledge of *Apollos*, to the contempt of *Paul*, for his wanting the excellency of *speech*; this way of using ministers is an unspeakable prejudice to the gospel-ministrations. Whilst some are running down *one*, and others *another*, what effect hath this, but to prejudice by-standers against them *all*? And what can this *end in*, but a breaking your *interest* in general, or a breaking the hearts of particular ministers?

BUT to return to the good disposition of our departed friend;

HE was of a very respectful temper and behaviour toward all, very careful not to *give* offence, and very unwilling and slow to *take* offence: If any thing of that kind happened, he was not easy till all was set to *rights*. He made it his constant practice every night to review what had pass'd in the day, and then set himself particularly to de-
I
vise

vise things that would make for *peace*. One of my brethren was much impress'd one evening with his conduct in a passage of this kind.

HE was remarkable for his affable and free way of conversing with the *poor*; he was very *good* and kind to them, advising them in the most friendly manner, both in what concerned their temporal and eternal interests.

IF I was now to speak the language of *near relations*, his conduct in his own family would appear most exemplary and amiable. Their affections would tenderly describe him as a most endearing *husband*, and *father*; and as a *friend* dearer than a *brother* to such as stood in that relation to him. He was a most obliging *son-in-law* to a late aged parent of his *wife*. He was indeed peculiarly happy in the relations of his *wife*; and particularly in the sincere friendship of Mr. *Theo. Rowe*. Among his own relations, he had one who gave him much uneasiness, but yet in many great and repeated instances he shew'd his concern for him, and an earnest desire of his doing well, both for this world and another. He was so kind to his servants as to instruct and direct them in their duty to God, to warn them against all *needless* expences, and particularly against all *sin*; and would keep for their use what little money they could save, allowing them very considerably for it.

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THE departure of such a *soul* is a great loss to those of his *own house*; and calls for your prayers, and for your friendly regards, more especially to a surviving, afflicted *son* and *widow*. May God be their protector and guide, and render them lasting comforts to each other.

SUCH a death is also a great loss to *society* in general. Every *cementing spirit* that is taken from us, is a weakning of the whole structure of our *churches*, and exposeth to the *ill practices* of narrow and *contentious* minds. But in an age wherein a Gospel *ministry* is brought into such general contempt, how few are there that think the breaches made upon us of late years worth laying to heart? and yet how rarely are they made up, by the diligence, temper, and usefulness of them that succeed?

BRETHREN, pray for *us*, that we may be further strengthened and encouraged in our work, — and pray for *yourselves*, that God would send forth more skilful and faithful *labourers* into his vineyard; and let your prayers be animated with an ardent desire, that the cause of *truth* and *liberty*, and a pure *scripture* religion, may still be supported, and may bless *future generations*.

I CONCLUDE this discourse, and the account of your deceased Pastor, with part of a letter that was written by one who attended him in his last *sickness*, and at his death.
“ Through-

“ Throughout the whole of his illness, he
“ shew’d an exemplary patience and sub-
“ mission to the divine will. In the be-
“ ginning of it, he express’d with an un-
“ common eagerness, and with tears, his
“ firm hope and expectation of the *sincerity*
“ of his conduct being accepted, notwith-
“ standing the imperfections of it. He had
“ lived in such a manner, and felt so much
“ of the force of religion, that he never
“ shewed the *least fear* of dying, but always
“ the contrary; speaking of death with the
“ greatest satisfaction, and the firmest assu-
“ rance and expectation of his partaking of
“ that happiness which follows it, to all true
“ Christians.”

A FRESH witness, this, to the truth of what has been said on the subject before us; that the power, sting, and terror of death, are taken away by a sincere belief of christianity, and of that life and immortality which are brought to light through the Gospel.

THE nature of that distemper which brought death, was such as to take away the use of reason, for the most part *; he could therefore say very little *then*, that might be of advantage to *living friends and relations*: But there was one thing worthy of their remarking, that the *last sermon* he preach’d, should be a consolatory discourse under *afflictive providences* †: He could not have

* A violent fever.

† Preach’d to a very numerous assembly at *Exeter*.

36 *A brief Account, &c.*

chosen a *text* more eminent and proper to serve such a purpose, than that which he preach'd upon; being the *first words* of our Saviour's consolatory discourse to his disciples, when he was going to lay down his life *. And that I may say nothing to carry your thoughts from them, I have reserved them for the *last words* of this sermon. Let them be considered, as if you heard them preach'd upon with the greatest life and spirit, by him who preach'd *his last* when he delivered his thoughts upon them; or rather, as if you heard CHRIST himself, who can speak not only to the *ear*, but to the *heart*, saying to you;—*Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in GOD, believe also in me.* To him be glory for ever. *Amen.*

* John xiv. 1.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

Page 11 l. 13 *for* faith, *read* state. p. 15 l. 3 *for* thro', *read* by.

